

# How Dompét Dhuafa Advances Education Through Islamic Giving

**Grantmaker and  
Implementing  
Organisation**

Type of Funder

**Indonesia**

Country

**1993**

Year Established

**Indonesia**

Active in

**Islam**

Faith

Dompét Dhuafa is an Indonesian philanthropic organisation dedicated to alleviating poverty through social services, education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. By leveraging Islamic financial instruments such as *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving), *waqf* (Islamic endowment funds), *hibah* (grants), and *sadaqah* (voluntary charity), Dompét Dhuafa blends faith-aligned giving with sustainable development strategies. As of 2024, it manages over IDR 223 billion (USD 13.8 million) in assets,<sup>1</sup> reflecting its effective management of Islamic philanthropic capital. While rooted in Islamic values of dignity, compassion, social justice, and equitable wealth distribution,<sup>2</sup> Dompét Dhuafa serves marginalised communities regardless of background, demonstrating the transformative potential of faith-based philanthropy in driving long-term, systemic change.



<sup>1</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2022-2023, [Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, n.d., [About Us](#)

# Unpacking the Values that Guide Dompet Dhuafa's Approach

Dompet Dhuafa's approach to giving is deeply influenced by the values of Islamic philanthropy, where acts of generosity are both spiritual and social. Central to this philosophy is *zakat*, a form of both almsgiving and worship in Islam that reflects a dual imperative: a faith-driven duty to support those in need (*mustahiq*), and a broader mission to redistribute wealth and promote social justice. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam that ensure wealth distribution in Muslim society. Alongside *zakat*, instruments such as *waqf*, *infaq*, *hibah*, and *sadaqah*<sup>3</sup> also collectively foster societal welfare. Grounded in Quranic teachings,<sup>4</sup> these values emphasise prioritising local communities, strengthening social bonds, and fostering empowerment.

Public trust and participation are central to Dompet Dhuafa's impact. By deploying resources within local communities, the organisation ensures its initiatives directly uplift surrounding communities, addressing immediate needs while fostering long-term development.

## Leveraging *Zakat* as a Tool to Promote Social Redistribution and Empower Future Community Leaders

Since Dompet Dhuafa's philanthropic approach is grounded in Islamic values of wealth redistribution,<sup>5</sup> *zakat* is viewed not just as a financial obligation but as a means to promote social equity. However, following the 2011 fatwa by the Indonesian Ulema Council permitting *zakat* to be channelled through managed, productive assets,<sup>6</sup> Dompet Dhuafa expanded its approach beyond traditional practice. As basic necessities were addressed, education emerged as a critical local priority, and Dompet Dhuafa became one of the first organisations to reinterpret *zakat*'s application, channelling it into educational initiatives as a foundational pillar of long-term community development.

"The act of giving *zakat* is both an act of faith and a step toward social equity."

**Haryo Mojopahit,**  
**Managing Director, IDEAS Dompet**  
**Dhuafa**

<sup>3</sup> Dompet Dhuafa, 2024, [What is the Difference between Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah? This is the explanation](#)

<sup>4</sup> Dompet Dhuafa, 2024, [A Good Society and State According to Islam](#)

<sup>5</sup> Islamic Relief, 2023, [Why is Zakat important?](#)

<sup>6</sup> Majelis Ulama Indonesia, n.d., [Penyaluran Harta Zakat Dalam Bentuk Aset Kelolaan \(Distribution of Zakat Funds in the Form of Managed Assets\)](#)

In the early 1990s, Dompét Dhuafa took a pioneering step by using *zakat* to fund scholarships. What began as tuition support aimed at the *mustahiq* (needy), was expanded to include leadership training, vocational skills, and community service projects. The goal was to emphasise dignity, leadership, and service to foster a new generation of 'intelligent Indonesians' characterised not only by academic excellence but also by their contribution to community development. The Dompét Dhuafa scholarship programme was crafted to empower students to lead with compassion and purpose, ultimately driving positive outcomes for entire communities.

To date, Dompét Dhuafa's educational programmes have reached over 53,000 beneficiaries across Indonesia. This includes 600 school students and 1,000 college students who have directly benefited through programmes delivered in around 230 institutions. Over 6,000 teachers have been reached through the 57 leadership projects conducted. Additionally, over 26,000 community members have indirectly benefited from programmes such as the 23 community reading parks that were recently established, highlighting Dompét Dhuafa's widespread impact.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, n.d., [Education Program](#)

# Combining *Zakat* and *Waqf* for Sustainable Education through Philanthropreneurship

Recognising that sustaining and scaling educational programmes requires more than just financial donations, the organisation employed a novel approach which combined *zakat* for operational needs and *waqf* for infrastructure development to ensure the continuity and scalability of its educational initiatives. Through *waqf* contributions, Dompét Dhuafa was able to establish schools and colleges such as the Al Syukro Universal in South Tangerang,<sup>8</sup> SMART Ekselensia Indonesia School,<sup>9</sup> Smart Cibinong School in Bogor,<sup>10</sup> and STIM Budi Bakti College of Management,<sup>11</sup> aimed at nurturing high-potential students from low-income backgrounds. Al Syukro Universal currently provides education to over 1,000 students from kindergarten through high school. SMART Ekselensia Indonesia educates more than 250 students at the same level. SMART Cibinong School has an enrollment of 765 students, and STIM Budi Bakti College of Management has 611 college students. The success of these schools highlights how *waqf*, traditionally used for healthcare and other services, can also serve as a long-term foundation for educational institutions.

This synergy between *zakat* and *waqf*, and focus on creating productive *waqf*<sup>12</sup>—*waqf* assets that can generate sustainable income, is one of the most distinctive aspects of Dompét Dhuafa's strategy—its unique *philanthropreneurship* model. This approach blends charitable giving with entrepreneurial principles to create sustainable, community-driven solutions. For instance, in the field of healthcare, *zakat* was initially used by the organisation to cover medical expenses for local community members who couldn't afford healthcare. However, as demand grew, Dompét Dhuafa established a hospital using *waqf* funds for capital investment and *zakat* for operational costs. The organisation also partnered with private insurers and the Indonesian government to provide insurance coverage to underserved populations, establishing a social enterprise element to the *philanthropreneurship* model, to foster sustainable impact in this field.

8 Dompét Dhuafa, 2024, [Dompét Dhuafa's Productive Waqf Success: Education Waqf Surplus Reaches Rp2.9 M](#)

9 Dompét Dhuafa, 2024, [High-Quality Free School for the Poor, SMART Ekselensia Opens Admission 2025](#)

10 Sekolah Smart Cibinong, n.d., [Sekolah Smart Cibinong \(Smart Cibinong School\)](#)

11 Kampus Budi Bakti, n.d., <https://stimbudibakti.ac.id/>

12 Dompét Dhuafa, 2023, [Productive Waqf: Building a Sustainable Islamic Economy](#)

Similarly, in education, Dompét Dhuafa applied the same model, utilising *zakat* for scholarships and teacher training while relying on *waqf* for long-term capital investment in school infrastructure. This approach also included the strategic use of productive *waqf*, a concept that emphasises generating income from *waqf* assets to sustain and expand educational services. For instance, the activation of *waqf* for the STIM Budi Bakti Institute is realised through a building lease scheme that generates income to support educational services.<sup>13</sup> For other learning initiatives, such as the Khadija Learning Centre, Dompét Dhuafa employs similar methods, aligned with the principles of productive *waqf*. These efforts include making improvements to building facilities, expanding offline promotions, optimising parking facilities, and facilitating rentals for various activities such as graduations and weddings, all designed to generate sustainable income that supports scholarships and educational services for underprivileged students and underserved community members.<sup>14</sup> The success of Dompét Dhuafa's productive *waqf* management in education demonstrates how productivity-oriented strategies can improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

SMART Ekselensia Indonesia, a comprehensive school for low-income students funded by this double-pronged approach, has significantly impacted the provision of quality, holistic education.<sup>15</sup> In line with Dompét Dhuafa's holistic capacity-building approach, the school also provides vocational training and leadership development. Established in 2004 in the Bogor district, SMART Ekselensia has graduated 13 batches, totalling 717 beneficiaries.<sup>16</sup> Recently, SMART Ekselensia Indonesia incorporated kindergarten and elementary levels.

Through the strategic combination of *zakat* and *waqf*, Dompét Dhuafa has not only built a sustainable educational ecosystem but also cultivated a model that can empower underserved students with key skills of leadership, vocation, and community-building, laying down a foundation for broader societal impact.

<sup>13</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2024, [Dompét Dhuafa's Productive Waqf Success: Education Waqf Surplus Reaches Rp2.9 M](#)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2024, [High-Quality Free School for the Poor: SMART Ekselensia Opens Admission 2025](#)

<sup>16</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, n.d., [Education Program](#)

## Initiative: Zona Madina — Leveraging Faith-Aligned Capital for Holistic Community Development Through Education

Dompét Dhuafa established Zona Madina in 2013 on 8.5 hectares of *waqf* (endowed) land in Parung, Bogor, to address systemic poverty through integrated education, healthcare, and economic empowerment initiatives.<sup>17</sup> Guided by Islamic values of social justice, redistribution, and compassion, this integrated development area utilises facilities like SMART Ekselensia Indonesia, a tuition-free boarding school for marginalised students, and Rumah Sehat Terpadu, a *waqf*-based hospital providing free medical care for those who are eligible. Zona Madina's educational focus includes:

- SMART Ekselensia and E-Tahfizh programmes, which graduated 46 students in the 2022-2023 academic year, with 20 securing placements in state universities, reflecting the programmes' effectiveness in preparing students for higher education.<sup>18</sup>
- Functional education tailored to regional needs, emphasising empowerment and regional development in alignment with local traditions.<sup>19</sup>
- Educational programmes that focus on producing outstanding leaders by instilling values such as honesty, discipline, courtesy, and care, and developing well-rounded individuals.<sup>20</sup>

Zona Madina also houses Dompét Dhuafa's scholarship programs: Etos ID Scholarship (16 universities), Student Activists Scholarship (BAKTI NUSA) (8 universities), Youth Ekselensia Scholarship (for high school students across 10 cities/regencies), and Prophetic Journalists Scholarship (1 university).

The site further features the Silat Jampang Village (Kampung Silat Jampang/KSJ), an initiative supporting over 60 traditional martial arts groups (*perguruan silat*) in the Jakarta Metro Area and West Java by enhancing their management and curriculum and organising competitions (Jampang Silat Competition and Jampang Silat Festival).

By leveraging *zakat* and *waqf*, Dompét Dhuafa transforms charitable giving into impactful, community-led development, showcasing the transformative power of belief systems in shaping education and social progress across Asia.

<sup>17</sup> Zona Madina, n.d., [Zona Madina](#)

<sup>18</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2023, [Producing Prestigious Leaders: LPI Dompét Dhuafa Graduation of 46 SMART and E-Tahfizh Students](#)

<sup>19</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2023, [Dompét Dhuafa Implements Functional Education Tailored to Regional Needs](#)

<sup>20</sup> Dompét Dhuafa, 2023, [Producing Prestigious Leaders: LPI Dompét Dhuafa Graduation of 46 SMART and E-Tahfizh Students](#)

# Bridging Short-Term Relief and Long-Term Impact

Despite being a forward-looking organisation with significant successes to date, Dompét Dhuafa continues to contend with the prevailing donor preference for short-term relief efforts, such as emergency aid, which often deliver quick, visible results. However, these immediate interventions, while crucial, can sometimes distract from the organisation's commitment to long-term educational and community development initiatives. The challenge for Dompét Dhuafa is to shift the perspective of donors, encouraging them to view *zakat* not merely as a tool for immediate aid, but as an investment in sustainable, long-term social development that empowers communities for generations.

In addition to this, there is a broader challenge in expanding the understanding of *waqf's* potential. Traditionally, *waqf* has been associated with the donation of land or physical assets, often for charitable or religious purposes. However, Dompét Dhuafa is working to educate donors about the transformative power of cash *waqf*, which can fund long-term projects in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This mindset shift is critical, as it opens up new avenues for sustainable development, allowing *waqf* to be leveraged as a long-term resource, rather than being seen as a one-off charitable contribution.



# Key Lessons for Faith-Aligned Giving in Asia

Dompét Dhuafa's approach offers some valuable lessons for faith-aligned philanthropists in Asia, particularly in innovating for financing while fostering dignity within their educational initiatives:

1. **Redefining Zakat's Role:** By using *zakat* for educational empowerment rather than just short-term relief, Dompét Dhuafa is shifting the paradigm, emphasising the importance of long-term investments in human capital as a means of addressing sustained social issues like poverty and access to education and health.
2. **Integrating Funding Models:** The combination of *zakat* for operational expenses and *waqf* for capital investment creates a balanced funding model that addresses both immediate needs and long-term goals. This integrated approach ensures sustainability and scalability.
3. **Advancing Waqf Literacy:** Dompét Dhuafa's efforts to promote the productive potential of *waqf* assets highlight the need for greater awareness and understanding of *waqf*'s long-term value. By educating donors, Dompét Dhuafa is helping to unlock the *waqf*'s full capacity to fund ongoing development projects.
4. **Philanthropreneurship in Education:** Dompét Dhuafa's blending of philanthropy with entrepreneurial principles, exemplified by its use of *zakat*, *waqf*, and insurance models, demonstrates how faith-based organisations can innovate to create sustainable solutions in education and beyond.

Dompét Dhuafa's journey exemplifies how faith-aligned philanthropy can drive long-term, systemic change. By combining traditional Islamic giving mechanisms with value-based educational models, the organisation is creating a sustainable ecosystem that uses education to empower communities. Dompét Dhuafa's innovative and forward-thinking use of *zakat* and *waqf* to fund diverse immediate and long-term needs provides a powerful example of how faith-aligned organisations can meet contemporary social challenges with dignity, compassion, and justice.


Explore the full brief on *How Values and Beliefs Shape Education in Asia*.





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